



SAFETY SERVICE PROTECTION

OHIO STATE HIGHWAY PATROL



Ohio State Highway Patrol Launches New Driver Safety Program for Teens, Encourages Parents to Talk with Teens about the Importance of Driving Safety during National Teen Driver Safety Week

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Ohio State Highway Patrol

Media Release



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Ohio State Highway Patrol Launches New Driver Safety Program for Teens, Encourages Parents to Talk with Teens about the Importance of Driving Safety during National Teen Driver Safety Week

COLUMBUS - Ohio State Highway Patrol Colonel Richard S. Fambro joined Ohio Traffic Safety Office Director Felice Moretti today to announce the launch of a new educational program for youth and to encourage parents to discuss the importance of driving safety with their young drivers.

National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 17-23, 2021, and is the perfect opportunity to talk with teens about safe driving habits. Parents of teen drivers can partner to support each other through this period of life. Ultimately, parents are in control.

“We want everyone on our roadways to make it home safely,” said Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. “Parents can play a vital role by ensuring young drivers are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to make good driving decisions.”

Since 2016, there have been 460 people killed on Ohio’s roadways in crashes involving a teen passenger vehicle driver (15-18 years old); 178 of the deaths were the teen driver. Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death for teens in the United States. Nationally, in 2019, an estimated 92,000 teen drivers were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes, and an estimated 264,000 people were injured in crashes involving a teen driver, accounting for almost 10% of all those injured that year.

“The loss of even one life on our roadways is too many,” said Col. Fambro, superintendent of the Patrol. “By avoiding dangers like driving distracted or impaired, obeying all traffic laws and speed limits, and ensuring everyone is buckled up, we can all make Ohio’s roadways safer.”

DRIVE to Live is a new educational program launched by the Patrol intended to positively impact our youth and engage in conversations about good decision making. It is geared toward meeting teens where they are and listening with as shared interest in their future. Success of this program will result in impacting Ohio’s youth in a positive manner and building relationships between students and those in public safety.

To schedule a presentation call 614-752-2792 or email oshp@dps.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Department of Public Safety’s [Teach your Teen to Drive website](#) offers parents and caregivers helpful tips and a framework for having discussions with their teen drivers about risky driving behaviors that can lead to fatal consequences.

“Parents play a critical role in teen driver safety in their ability to consistently communicate important driving safety information,” said Moretti, whose office housed within the Ohio Department of Public Safety. “New teen drivers are still gaining experience behind the wheel, which increases the chance of dangerous situations for the teen and others around them.”

By sharing their driving experience, parents can help teen drivers make smart choices and actions to stay safe on the road. The website provides helpful, evidence-based resources to teach your teen how to drive safely during the supervised driving (or learner's permit) stage of licensure.

Below are some basic rules parents can use to help reduce the risks for teen drivers:

1. **Impaired Driving:** All teens are too young to legally buy, possess, or consume alcohol. However, in Ohio, 18% of teen drivers involved in fatal crashes since 2016 had alcohol and/or drugs in their system. Alcohol isn’t the only substance that can keep teens from driving safely; marijuana affects a driver’s ability to react to their surroundings. Driving is a complex task and marijuana slows the reaction time. Remind teens that driving under the influence of any impairing substance – including illicit or prescription drugs, or over-the-counter medication – can have deadly consequences. Let teens know this behavior won’t be tolerated.
2. **Seat Belt Safety:** Wearing a seat belt is one of the simplest ways for teens to stay safe in a vehicle. Yet, too many of Ohio’s teens aren’t buckling up. Since 2016, half of the teen drivers who died in crashes were unbuckled. Teen drivers and passengers are more likely to die in a crash if they are unbuckled. Empower teens to stand strong and confirm everyone is buckled up – including front seat and back seat passengers – before the vehicle moves. Reward teens with driving privileges for buckling up every trip, every time, and requiring their passengers to do the same.
3. **Distracted Driving:** Cell phone use while driving is more than just risky — it can be deadly. Texting while driving is outlawed in 47 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Remind teens about the dangers of using a phone while driving and clarify that any phone use (texting, talking, or using any social media apps) is unacceptable.

Distracted driving isn’t limited to cell phone use. Other passengers, audio, and climate controls in the vehicle, eating, or drinking while driving are all examples of dangerous distractions for teen drivers. Across the U.S. in 2019, among teen drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes, 10% were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. Remind teens that headphones are not appropriate to wear while driving a vehicle. All drivers need to be able to hear another vehicle’s horn or the siren from an emergency vehicle, so they can safely move over and out of the path.

4. **Speed Limits:** Speeding is a critical issue for all drivers, especially for teens who are less experienced. Since 2016, more than one-quarter (27%) of Ohio's teen drivers of passenger vehicles involved in fatal crashes were speeding at the time of the crash. Males were more likely to be involved in fatal speeding-related crashes than females. Remind teens to always drive within the speed limit.
5. **Passengers:** Passengers in a teen's vehicle can lead to disastrous consequences. Research shows the risk of a fatal crash dramatically increases in direct relation to the number of passengers in a vehicle. The likelihood of teen drivers engaging in risky behavior triples when traveling with multiple passengers. (Widow)

Parents can help protect their teen drivers by discussing risky driving behaviors. Self-reported surveys show that teens whose parents set firm rules for driving typically engaged in less risky driving behaviors and were involved in fewer crashes.

"I encourage parents to discuss with teen drivers the dangers and consequences of distracted driving, and to ensure that their teen drivers have adequate insurance protection," Ohio Department of Insurance Director Judith L. French said.

The Ohio Department of Insurance provides the following insurance tips for teen drivers:

- Parents should conduct a teen driver insurance review with an agent. Having a teen driver in the house can affect the family's auto insurance premium.
- The type of vehicle a teen driver uses and driving violations can impact the cost of insurance.
- Most insurance companies offer discounts for having more than one car on a policy or having both your auto and homeowners insurance with the same company.
- Ohioans with insurance questions can call the Ohio Department of Insurance at 1-800-686-1526 and visit www.insurance.ohio.gov for information.

Teens need to understand the rules and any other restrictions outlined in Ohio's graduated driver licensing (GDL) law and the deadly consequences that could occur. By knowing and enforcing the laws, the teen driver's safety and that of others on the road is improved.

For video coverage of today's event, visit <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8945961>.

For more information about National Teen Driver Safety, visit www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving.

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